

Why it works:

- **RELATIONSHIPS** Foster parents are able to form non-threatening relationships with parents.
- **FOSTER PARENTS CARE** They understand the needs of the children in foster care and they embrace the philosophy that kids belong with their parents.
- **MENTORS ARE EXCEPTIONAL** foster parents and are committed to children and families. They value the relationships they have with the parents and families they work with.
- **OBJECTIVES IDENTIFIED** by the Action Plan are targeted towards specific barriers the family faces.
- **AN UNDER UTILIZED RESOURCE**, the skills of foster parents are harnessed to fill gaps in the services offered to families.
- **DWINDLING RESOURCES** in a climate of increased need for services, DCFS has tapped an experienced and available resource to assist families.

Program goals:

- **ENHANCE** child safety.
- **INCREASE** rates of reunification among families in Child Welfare.
- **SHORTEN** a child's length of stay in foster care.
- **REDUCE** rates of re-entry into care.

Program Coordinators

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Building
Relationships
and
Rebuilding
Families

Parent
Mentoring
Program

Building Relationships and Rebuilding Families

Parent Mentoring Program



What it is:

- **A PROVEN EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION** that has demonstrated shorter length of stay for children in care and increased reunification rates for families.
- **A STRUCTURED PROGRAM** sponsored by DCFS utilizing specifically selected and trained foster parents to assist parents involved in child welfare toward reunification with their children.
- **A SKILL-BASED SERVICE** for families driven by an Action Plan established by the family and the social worker.
- **A PROGRAM FOCUSED ON ASSISTING FAMILIES** in addressing the barriers that prevent safe and sustained reunification with their children.
- **MENTORS ARE HIGHLY EFFECTIVE IN HELPING PARENTS** build skills and facilitate engagement in court ordered services.

- **MENTORS WORK ONE ON ONE WITH FAMILIES** and effectively establish non-adversarial relationships that often outlast the time period of the formal intervention.
- **MENTORS ASSIST FAMILIES** often isolated by substance abuse in establishing healthy forms of social support and assist them in repairing fractured family relationships.
- **MENTORS TEACH FAMILIES** to advocate for themselves.
- **MENTORS ARE ROLE MODELS.**

How it works

- **A FAMILY'S PARTICIPATION** in the program is strictly voluntary. The service is not court ordered.
- **MENTORS ARE REFERRED BY THE ASSIGNED SOCIAL WORKER** who has discussed the benefits of the program with their client.
- **THE FAMILY, SOCIAL WORKER AND MENTOR WORK TOGETHER** to establish an Action Plan outlining the goals of the intervention.
- **MENTORS ARE ENGAGED WITH THEIR ASSIGNED FAMILIES** for five hours each week to address the needs identified in the Action Plan.
- **THE FORMAL INTERVENTION PERIOD** lasts for a period of four to six months.
- **MENTORS ARE SUPERVISED AND SUPPORTED** by Program Coordinators.
- **MENTORS RECEIVE ONGOING TRAINING.**